

Economic Development Committee Meeting
Town of Bridgeville
Minutes
Wednesday, July 20, 2016 9:00 a.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Attending: John Brodeur, Deborah Brown, Brenda Rambo, Ralph Root, Jeff Tull, Ruth Skala

Absent: Jack Dalton, Harris Mager, Charles Smith, Lawrence Tassone

Minutes: June 1, 2016 minutes were approved

License Plates: John Brodeur reported that fifty-one license plates had been sold. It was also noted that most of the banners are now in place on Market and Main Streets.

Regulation Review Update: Ralph Root reported that he has not received the online source document and no review has taken place to date.

Meetings Report: Chairperson Ruth Skala reported that she had attended several meetings since the last EDC meeting.

- She met with Bridgeville Emporium owner Tim Curry on June 6th. They discussed the reopening of the business. With a twenty year history in Bridgeville, Tim expressed his desire to reopen. The possibility of a sidewalk clearance sale might be a first step to clearing space for new displays and marketing. They reviewed some of the ideas Ruth learned at DEDO's Small Business Mentor Workshops. Tim plans to install new signage and felt another town grant would be extremely helpful. Also working with the Chamber of Commerce for a ribbon cutting and online marketing is part of the plan. The timeframe is still unclear.
- On the same day Ruth met with Mike Layton, Layton's Hardware. He is interested in replacing the awning and looks forward to applying for a town grant. Long term plans for the business remain unclear. When questioned about the adjacent building and store front that are in terrible disrepair, he expressed a lack of funds to do all the work necessary to bring both up to code.
- On June 27 Ruth met with town manager, Jesse Savage. Part of the discussion included a request by Ruth to establish future Commission priorities. This included the condition of Market Street: condition of sidewalks, condemned property at 410, future of 104, next round of grants, cost of implementing the Muldrow streetscape, the barbershop cinderblock wall, possibility of food trucks and a farmers market. There was a discussion about marketing Bridgeville in several business journals, the cost of sewer hookup from Royal Farms to Scott's Furniture and the opening of the 404 annex road to Heritage Shores (promised by HS developer for September 2017).

Sidewalk Discussion: Based on Ruth's earlier discussion with Jesse, the EDC discussed the pros and cons of recommending to the Commission that the town assume responsibility for the

Market Street sidewalks. If there was any chance of implementing the full Muldrow streetscape sidewalks would be included. An ordinance change is necessary for the town to move forward. Jeff Tull questioned the change as it affects property owners who have fulfilled the repair obligation at their own expense. Ralph Root was concerned about how the change would fit into the overall plan for downtown. Who would be responsible after the replacement and what about businesses that have already paid for repairs? John Brodeur questioned why there is such disrepair. If the current law requires property owners to maintain their sidewalks, why is the law not being enforced?

Brenda Rambo indicated that many property owners cannot afford the repair or have chosen to ignore the town's requirement in spite of enforcement notices. If the town takes over Market Street and hires a contractor to replace all the sidewalks, she felt it would be beneficial if homeowners on other streets could group together using the same contractor to do the repairs at a lesser expense to the individual property owners. She also indicated that doing sidewalk replacement (a simpler plan) as opposed to an entire streetscape would be more realistic for Bridgeville at this time.

Knowing that grant and state money for sidewalk replacement would be accessible to the town, the EDC decided to recommend an ordinance change that would make the town responsible for the sidewalks on Market Street between Main Street and Railroad Avenue.

Code Enforcement: In discussing the reopening of 104 Market Street Jeff Tull told the EDC that a certified plan needs to be approved by the County Code Enforcer, Andy Wright, before the Bridgeville permit can be issued. A new business coming into that location would need to meet with an architect and draw up a plan per fire and county code that would be stamped. Since members of the committee were unaware of these requirements, it was decided that the County Code Enforcer would be invited to our August meeting to clarify. Brenda Rambo offered to extend the invitation to Andy Wright.

Implementation of Strategic Plan: Chairperson Ruth Skala restated that it was time for the EDC to prioritize and decide how to implement the Strategic Plan. She requested that each member accept responsibility for a specific aspect of the plan that interests them most.

Jeff Tull said that this was premature as economic development takes time and that things are happening but slowly. We are headed in the right direction. Ruth questioned where we find the businesses and it was suggested that we engage the bankers and realtors. Jeff suggested that we speak with the communities that have been successful such as Apex, NC, Berlin, MD and Easton, MD. He volunteered to make the contacts with these communities.

John Brodeur said he is most interested in the branding and marketing aspects. This includes event planning and advertising. Ruth gave him the contact information for a state business journal.

Deborah Brown will be looking into the historical background of the town and efforts for preservation that can be promulgated. She also questioned whether the economic development effort should pursue 501c3 status.

Brenda Rambo will be available for projects as needed.

Ralph Root said he is interested in design and planning and the tactical aspects of our effort. He will contact the architect and planner that worked with Ben Muldrow as well as Bob Rausch for advice on best steps for implementing our plans.

Harris Mager although absent from the meeting expressed a desire to see us move forward with Market Street Improvements.

Jack Dalton continues to be interested in assisting the town in resolving its wastewater needs through consolidation with other municipalities in Western Sussex County.

It was agreed that each member will report his/her findings to the committee at the August 17 meeting. Hopefully the County Code Enforcer will be in attendance.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, August 17 9:00 a.m. Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Skala, Chairperson Economic Development Committee